

Exposing Your Unseen Enemy

“The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy” John 10:10

Make no mistake about it: that selfish pursuit or moral compromise that has come to tempt you is designed to steal your inheritance and knock you off course. In this chapter you will learn who your unseen tempter is, where he came from, what he wants, and what you need to know to defeat him.

Your enemy, also known as Satan, will be after your soul until the day you leave this earth. The better you know him, and how he operates, the more effective you'll be at defeating him. You give Satan a dangerous advantage if you doubt that he exists, or if you only see him as a distant figure fighting against God, and not you personally. The truth is **you** are his target because you are God's precious child designed for glorious purposes. Therefore, Satan relishes the idea of capturing your soul and using you to serve evil.

The kingdom of darkness is subtly woven into the fabric of every society on earth. Its effect is to keep people self-centered, so they won't become God-centered and filled with His Spirit and light. Jesus revealed the origins of Satan's kingdom when He told His disciples:

"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven." Luke 10:17

It's hard to imagine that the devil was ever a part of God's Kingdom in heaven, but he was. He was a beautiful angel named Lucifer, which means light. In fact, he was the most beautiful angel in heaven until he became prideful and wicked and God changed his name to Satan, which means the deceiver. In the Book of Ezekiel, God says to Satan:

“You were the model of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the Garden of God; every precious stone adorned you... You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you... Your heart became proud on account of your beauty and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So I threw you to the earth. I made a spectacle of you before kings.” Ezekiel 28:12-17

There are two extreme belief systems concerning Satan. Both are wrong. One extreme is the helpless victim who fears the devil. The other extreme is the New Age believer who doesn't think the devil even exists. The early twentieth century evangelist, Billy Sunday, said it best, “I know the devil is real, because I've done business with him.” The Scriptures say the whole world is under the control of the devil (1 John 5:19). So, the sad fact is, we've all done business with him. But most of the time we've been too deceived to know it. In the Book of Revelation, Satan is referred to as the great dragon, the one who deceives the entire world.

“So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and **Satan, who deceives the whole world**; he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:9

God cast Satan to the earth after he led a rebellion in heaven. One third of the angels sided with the devil during that rebellion, and so they too were cast down, stripped of God's heavenly light, and reduced to existing as grotesque demons. To this day, the devil and his demons are still warring and rebelling against God. Only now, they attack God by bombarding his children with lies and deceptions designed to stress them out and drive them to destruction. Anyone who has not found Jesus, the only gateway out of this fallen world, is still enslaved in darkness by the great deceiver. Jesus said:

"I am the gate: whoever enters through me will be saved." John 10:9

"As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world, and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient."
Ephesians 2:1-2

YOUR UNSEEN ENEMY IS ANTI-JESUS

The devil hates Jesus more than anything, because Jesus' work on the cross enabled you to be snatched out of darkness, and released into the Kingdom of Heaven. So, it's important to note that although you met the only Savior who could deliver you out of darkness, you also met the One Person the devil didn't want you to know. Jesus says:

"I am the way, and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6

Any religion that fails to mention Jesus' perfect sacrifice and His cross, is a dead religion blocking its followers from finding the only doorway out of this fallen world. Your unseen enemy would have preferred that you committed your life to Buddha, Mohammed, or any of the Hindu gods. Anyone but Jesus.

"Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist."
2 John 1:7.

Once you become a Christian, the devil will subtly try to convince you that following Jesus is too hard, too costly, too boring, too weird, or maybe just not necessary. Therefore, don't be surprised when you sense that your relationship with Jesus is under attack. The devil will not be satisfied until you turn your back on Jesus, and wander back into sin and darkness. Jesus said you are blessed when you don't fall for the devil's tactics to reject Him.

"Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me." Luke 7:23

The devil knows that when you follow Christ, His Holy Spirit will lead you to everything your heart has ever searched for. That is why the Bible says:

"Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." Matthew 6:33

YOUR UNSEEN ENEMY'S TACTICS

The war the devil wages against Christians is very different from the war he wages against non-believers. For nonbelievers, he simply focuses on keeping them away from Jesus so they can't find the only doorway into God's Kingdom. But once you become a believer, the devil has to radically shift his tactics. Now his goal must be to convince you that you're in trouble with God because of your sinful thoughts. Before you were a Christian, you weren't bothered by sinful thoughts. When they popped into your head, you either rejected them or followed them, depending on what seemed more profitable to you. But after you become a Christian, you are suddenly horrified and self-conscious of anything sinful coming from the inside of you.

The only way to defeat the devil is to know that for as long as you live in this fallen world, you will continue to have two opposing natures inside of you: your old sin nature (also called your flesh) and your new righteous nature which is directly connected to God's Spirit. You are never to feel bad about your old sin nature or any wicked thoughts that seep out of it. You are simply to ignore those thoughts and reckon your sin nature dead. If you don't know for sure that God considers your sin nature dead in Christ, then the devil will use your sinful thoughts to manipulate your soul. The Bible warns:

“I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to **abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.**” 1 Peter 2:11

The devil likes to use your sinful nature to confuse you, and make you feel too ashamed to approach God. But God wants you to recognize that every sinful, fearful, selfish thought you have comes out of your sin nature, which He considers to be dead. He simply wants you to ignore wicked thoughts from now on, and focus on your righteous new nature in Christ.

“Likewise you also, **reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**” Romans 6:11

If you focus on the thoughts coming out of your sin nature, you will become filled with stress and even vulnerable to sin. Believing those lies is like living on a never-ending treadmill of striving to keep yourself and your family safe, financially secure, physically attractive, socially acceptable, morally right with God, and on and on. Over time, the mental anguish of trying to keep it all together can cause your immune system to be compromised, making you vulnerable to sickness and disease. Your physical destruction is ultimately what the devil is after.

All the while, God is waiting for you to reckon your old sin nature dead (no matter what thoughts come out of it) and enter His promised land of rest in your new creation in Christ. Your new, righteous nature is how God sees you. Once you agree with God, the devil will no longer be able to manipulate or condemn you because of your thoughts.

“There is therefore now no condemnation for them that are in Christ Jesus.”
Romans 8:1

SERVING GOD INSTEAD OF YOUR UNSEEN ENEMY

Ever since the Garden of Eden, God has desired sons and daughters, who would know Him. That is why God has given you, and every other believer, unique gifts that can be used to lead people out of this dark, fallen world and into His loving arms. You may be gifted at making money, working with your hands, organizing projects, creative arts, teaching, etc. No matter what your particular gifting is, it can be used directly or indirectly to lead people to Jesus.

The good news is you don't have to be in full time ministry in order to serve God. God can use you in any field. In fact, you can often serve God even more effectively when you are doing what you excel at. As you gain prominence in your field, you can use your influence to establish God's Kingdom in that arena of society. The devil, on the other hand, wants you to waste the influence and money you earn on selfish pursuits and pleasures. If you do, your heart will eventually cry out, "Why am I still not satisfied?"

True fulfillment can only be found when you are doing the assignments God designed you to do. When you foster your relationship with God, through His Son, Jesus, you will be supernaturally guided into your divine purpose. That is why the devil will do everything he can to block you from finding Jesus. Once you do find Jesus, then the devil's only hope is to trick you into believing God is mad at you because of your sin nature.

But fear not, no matter what sinful temptation or demonic activity the devil sends your way, Jesus will give you His authority and His power to defeat it, just like He did with His early disciples:

"The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." Luke 10:17

"You give us victory over our enemies. You put our adversaries to shame."
Psalm 44:7

Even though your unseen enemy is ultimately a defeated foe, you will never be able to say, "I'm smart enough to handle the devil on my own now." You will always need the power of the Holy Spirit within you and God's Word to quench the fiery darts of the evil one. The moment you doubt Jesus' finished work on the cross, or start rejecting His Word, your mind will rapidly begin taking on the lies of the enemy, causing you to turn further and further away from God's grace and peace.

When you are finally able to rest in your new creation in Christ and the infallible truth of God's Word, the rest of the wall between you and God will burst like a dam, and God's Spirit will flow like a river into the dry lands of your soul. In the exercises that follow, you will establish the boundaries of your life, and take back any territory the devil is attempting to steal or defile.

PRAYER - Jesus, I am so grateful that You came to be a gateway out of this fallen world. I want Your Holy Spirit to inhabit all that I am and all that I have. I want to know Your love and to follow Your Spirit all the remaining days of my life. Help me to reject the plans of my unseen enemy, so I can fulfill the assignments God the Father created for me to walk in. In Your precious name, I pray. Amen.

YOUR TERRITORY

God wants to make you a fountain of life that spills His love and goodness everywhere you go.

“He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.” John 7:38

Jesus taught us to pray that God’s Kingdom would come. God’s Kingdom comes when you yield to His Spirit and allow Him to touch those around you.

“Your Kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.”
Matthew 6:10

Every time God’s Kingdom is established in a person’s life, the devil loses ground, and God’s light replaces darkness. In the last chapter you prayed for God’s Spirit to rule and reign, in your soul (your mind, your will, and your emotions). Now you are going to pray for God’s Kingdom to expand into your marriage, family, neighborhood, office, school, city and nation. In the Old Testament, Jabez prayed for God to expand his territory and God blessed him.

“Jabez cried out to the God of Israel, "Oh, that You would bless me and enlarge my territory! Let your hand be with me, and keep me from harm so that I will be free from pain." And God granted his request.” 1 Chronicles 4:10

Whenever God blesses you with a sphere of influence, He wants you to establish His peace and joy in that territory. Of course, the devil wants to keep your territory filled with darkness, confusion, and stress. In this exercise, you are going to map out the territory God has already given you. The clearer you are about what God is trying to fill with His glorious presence, the better you’ll be partnering with Him to bring His will to pass.

Describe everything you believe God has given you to steward, including your relationships, land, and finances. (An example of your territory might include: your physical body, your marriage, your children, your money, etc.)

PRAYER: Lord, I surrender everything I own, and all that you have called me to steward, to You. I invite Your Holy Spirit to inhabit my physical body, my marriage, children, home, finances, job, place of worship, etc. Let Your light fill every dark place, and Your Love displace every fear that is operating in these territories. Thank You that Your light provides a hedge of protection in which I can rest. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

YOUR ASSIGNMENT:

“Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, Who does not change like shifting shadows.” James 1:17

Your gifts and talents are powerful tools designed to flood your sphere of influence with God’s light. Many times you may not value your strengths, simply because they come so easily to you. It is wise to acknowledge and to recognize what you naturally excel in, so you can dedicate those talents to the Lord. Don’t ever believe the lie that you are somehow not good enough for God. God designed you to be the perfect person to successfully complete whatever assignment He has for you. The devil will try to knock you off course by tempting you to be something you’re not. Taking on a false identity will lead to failure every time. But when you are doing what God designed you to do, you will not fail.

God has unique assignments for you to complete on this earth. There will be obstacles and battles along the way, and not every strategy for victory will be the same. That is why you need to be in constant contact with Jesus, who says, “My sheep hear my voice” (John 10:27). Jesus wants to give you direction and supernatural help so you can be victorious in all that you do.

Ask the Holy Spirit what gifts and talents God has given you:

Has the devil ever tried to use your gifts? In what way?

Ask the Holy Spirit what your current assignment is in God’s Kingdom:

PRAYER: Thank You, Lord, for designing me to be successful. I am so grateful that I have all the gifts and talents I need to complete what You want me to do. Help me to stay on Your course for my life and not get distracted by sinful pleasures, and/or busy work that You did not assign me to do. Please give me Your wisdom and strength to run the race You have set before me. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.

YOUR WEAKEST LINK

Temptations will come. There is no way to live in this world and avoid them. Temptation always starts with a simple thought coming through your sin nature. If you stay focused on that tempting thought, it will become a desire. If you desire something long enough, it will grow into a choice. The point is there is time between a tempting thought and acting on a desire. The sooner you combat the thought with the truth of God's Word, the easier it is to overcome the temptation. Once a thought grows into a desire, it naturally matures into sin if it is not stopped. The Bible says:

“When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” James 1:13-15

The devil will never fight fair. He will always try to pull you back into his kingdom by going after your greatest weakness. If the devil came to tempt Jesus in three different areas, you can bet he will do the same to you. As we discussed in a previous chapter, Jesus battled each of the devil's tempting ideas by quoting a Scripture that contradicted every lie the devil spoke to Him. The Word of God is the most powerful weapon that God has given you. You can use it to combat any temptation or lie. The good news is you will never be tempted beyond your ability to resist.

“No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.”
1 Corinthians 10:13

In this exercise you will identify three areas of your life that you believe may be vulnerable to the devil's attack.

1. Name Your WEAKEST area. The one most susceptible to temptation: _____

What is the main lie the devil wants you to believe about yourself in this area? _____

What Scriptures can you use to battle that lie? _____

What practical steps can you take to win the battle for your soul in this area?

2. Identify your SECOND weakest area: _____

What is the lie the devil wants you to believe about yourself in this area? _____

What Scripture can you use to battle that lie? _____

What practical steps can you take to win the battle for your soul in this area?

3. Identify your THIRD weakest area: _____

What is the lie the devil wants you to believe about yourself in this area? _____

What Scripture can you use to battle that lie? _____

What practical steps can you take to win the battle for your soul in this area?

PRAYER: Lord, I pray for wisdom, and grace, to dismiss ungodly thoughts before they grow into desires. Help me to stay focused on my righteous identity in Christ, so I will be empowered to overcome temptations. I am so grateful that I will never be tempted beyond my ability to resist. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for teaching and guiding me in the way I should go. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Inheritance Alert – The Mind Of Christ

Your battles with the devil will all begin in your mind. The bad news is he is so crafty and experienced that he can outwit you in every situation. The good news is he can't outwit God. The best news is – God has given you the mind of Christ so that you can be victorious over the devil in every situation. The Bible says that all believers have inherited the mind of Christ:

“We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words... **we have the mind of Christ.**” 1 Corinthians 2:12-16

To access your inheritance of the mind of Christ you must:

- Be filled with the Holy Spirit and submit to His leadings, and.
- Yield to the Word of God. Remember Jesus is the Word (John 1:1)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” Romans 12:1-2

Your phenomenal inheritance of the mind of Christ will cause you to think very differently than the world thinks. You will know things that are hidden from the wise. You will understand things far beyond your intellectual capacity. You will discern spiritual matters that cannot be seen by the natural mind. You will beat the devil every time. Praise the Lord for giving you access to the mind of Christ!!!

CHOOSE THIS DAY WHOM YOU WILL SERVE

”But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.” Joshua 24:15

In the grand scheme of things, your life is short (James 4:14.) Your time on earth is the only time you will ever be able to love God in the face of adversity. Once you get to Heaven, there will be no more opportunities to make sacrifices for Him. Now is your chance. Jesus says there is no middle ground. You are either helping Him gather souls into God's Kingdom, or you are not.

”He who is not with me is against me, and he who does not gather with me scatters.” Matthew 12:30

God wants your help, but the devil wants to make you indifferent towards, or fearful of, leading people to Jesus. Every day you get to choose which kingdom you will serve.

Most sane people do not willingly serve the devil. That is why his evil kingdom is cloaked in inviting surroundings which appear harmless. There is no big sign over addiction, gluttony, pornography, or adultery that says, "BEWARE, you are now submitting to the kingdom of darkness." Most people end up serving the devil without ever realizing it. Every time you submit to lust, unforgiveness, gossip, fear, strife, rebellion, perversion, greed etc., you inadvertently become the devil's slave and start serving his purposes. Sinful behavior is not just one of your personality flaws. It is a choice you make that ends up imprisoning your soul. If you continue to consciously reject God and choose evil, then God has no other choice but to let you suffer the consequences of living in the kingdom of darkness.

"My Spirit will not strive with man forever," Genesis 6:3

The devil is experienced. He is subtle and he can be patient. When he tempts you, he'll even allow you to enjoy seasons of great fun inside of sin, just to make sure you are convinced that living in God's Kingdom is not necessary. All the while, evil will be taking more ground in your heart and soul. Slowly, but surely, you will be deceived into believing sinful behavior is not really that bad. God's Word will seem more and more archaic and irrelevant, as you become rooted and grounded in the selfish morals of this fallen world.

Do not be deceived when you notice ungodly people enjoying what appears to be a blessed life. The Bible says a day is coming when only those who are serving God will be blessed.

"You have said, 'It is futile to serve God. What did we gain by carrying out his requirements and going about like mourners before the LORD Almighty? But now we call the arrogant blessed. Certainly the evildoers prosper, and even those who challenge God escape.' "Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. "They will be mine," says the LORD Almighty, "in the day when I make up my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as in compassion a man spares his son who serves him. **And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not.**" Malachi 3:14-18

In this last exercise, you will expose your unseen enemy by recognizing his ploys to capture your soul, and lull you into unconsciously serving his wicked purposes.

Why would the devil delight in your following the world?

What type of friends do you think the devil wants you to have?

What do you think the devil wants you to spend your money on?

How do you think the devil wants you to spend your time?

Write down the activities you spend the majority of your time on. Now ask the Holy Spirit which activities God wants you to continue, cut back on, or stop altogether.

God considers you His child and He wants to bless you. What does the devil consider you and for what purpose does he pursue you?

PRAYER: Teach me to discern the subtle ways I unknowingly submit to serving the kingdom of darkness. Lord, discipline me early, and give me the spirit of repentance, so that I may turn from evil and be quickly restored back to grace. I want to partner with Jesus to help gather souls into Your Heavenly Kingdom. Forgive me, Lord, for every time I have been too selfish or fearful to follow the promptings of Your Holy Spirit to lead others to You. Father God, help me to serve Your Kingdom all the remaining days of my life. In Jesus name, I pray. Amen.

Construction Zone – SLOW DOWN

Jesus is here to remove the lie in your belief system that says you can lead a fulfilling life independent from Him. The truth is you will only find your true life in Christ.

“Then Jesus said to his disciples, "If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me. **For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for Me will find it.**”
Matthew 16:24-25

- I renounce the lie that I will be more satisfied in the world, than I will be serving God. The truth is God is ready and able to fulfill me now:

“**He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him;** He hears their cry and saves them.” Psalm 145:19

“You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.”
Psalm 145:16

“For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: **no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.**” Psalm 84:11

If you just renounced the lie that it is better to run your own life, and you have committed to letting Jesus be the Lord of your life, then the wall between you and God is finally being demolished. Hallelujah!

Praise the Lord

Let's praise Jesus for His Lordship. Tell the Lord three reasons why you are grateful that He is now running your life instead of you:

Private Practice

Go fishing with God. Ask the Lord to use you this week to lead one or more souls out of darkness and into His Kingdom. Pray for divine timing and divine appointments. Then submit to His Holy Spirit.

"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."
Matthew 4:19

Remaining Free From Your Past

No matter how great you have imagined your life to be, God's plans for you are greater. The Scriptures make it abundantly clear that you are invited to live inside God's unlimited Kingdom of Heaven now, before you leave this earth. Hallelujah! Jesus is not just the Savior Who brings you to Heaven when you die; He is the One Who ushers you into Heaven now! The simple act of trusting and following Jesus into your future is what will empower you to remain free from your past.

Your future in Christ involves living inside the Kingdom of Heaven with the Creator of the Universe for eternity. Jesus said:

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am.” John 14:3

The good news is that your place with Jesus in God's Kingdom is ready now, so your future can begin today. God is calling you to come up higher where He is. There are riches and truths in Heaven that you need to draw on in order to fulfill your divine destiny. So, how do you begin? Remember, God's Kingdom is located within you, which means you're going to have to activate your imagination and faith to get there. Jesus said:

“...The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is within you.” Luke 17:20-21

Jesus has completed every requirement needed to bring you right into His Father's throne room in Heaven. Beware of any teachings that make accessing God or His Kingdom seem like something you have to earn by doing good deeds. After you receive Jesus as your Savior, you simply enter Heaven by taking a giant leap of faith, in the same way a child begins a game of “pretend”.

“I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” Mark 10:15

Just imagine God's Kingdom as it is described in His Word. Then believe that the impressions that come to you, regarding the Lord, and your heavenly position in Christ are real. No matter how faint or vague God's Kingdom first appears, faith and a persistent focus will cause it to grow more tangible. Jesus said:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all your seeds, **yet when it grows**, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and perch in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32